

A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
H O L Y S A C R A M E N T
O F T H E
L O R D ' s S U P P E R ;

A D D R E S S E D T O T H E
I n h a b i t a n t s o f a p o p u l o u s P a r i s h n e a r L o n d o n .

B y A L A Y M A N ;
L i v i n g i n t h e s a i d P a r i s h .

L O N D O N :
P r i n t e d f o r J . R O B S O N , B o o k s e l l e r ,
A t t h e F e a t h e r s i n N e w B o n d - S t r e e t .

M D C C L X X I .



My dear Neighbours and Friends,

AFTER the many pious and useful Treatises that have been written upon the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, it may appear unnecessary, if not presumptuous, to attempt any Thing new upon that Subject; especially to you of this Parish, who have so often heard it properly explained, and the Obligations to it excellently enforced by our very worthy Minister. Yet it is Matter of great Concern to me to observe how much this Duty is in general neglected; not only by the profane and irreligious (who indeed

*ought not to join in this, or any Part of publick Worship) but by many, very many, honest well-disposed Christians, who regularly attend the common Service of the Church, but as constantly turn their Backs on this holy Ordinance, which is the most important and beneficial of all. Much indeed has been written on this Subject—perhaps a great deal too much; and sometimes, I fear, not in so plain and clear a Manner as it ought. Difficulties have been started, and long Forms of Preparation prescribed, by devout, but ill-judging Writers, without any Warrant from Scripture; which have only served to perplex the Minds of the weak and scrupulous, and to deter them from joining in a necessary Part of Christian Worship. Something therefore seems to be still wanting, in order to clear up the Mistakes, and remove the Doubts and Fears, of all such as are sincerely desirous of doing
their*

their Duty, and who really do it in other Respects to the best of their Abilities, and yet are shamefully neglectful of this very material Part of it. With this View I have undertaken the following Essay; not to make a Shew of my Learning or Abilities, (which, God knows, I have no Reason to boast of) but purely from a Desire of doing some little Good in the Parish where I live, and whose Welfare I have entirely at Heart. You must not therefore expect from me any Thing curious or learned; but a plain, easy Discourse, suited to every one's Capacity. Scripture, and plain Reasoning from Scripture, is what I here present you with. Let me only intreat you to lay aside all Prejudices, and to give it a fair, impartial, and attentive Reading. And may God grant it to have the desired Effect, in convincing you of your Duty, removing your Fears and Scruples, and so
bringing

bringing you to a constant and devout Attendance at his holy Table ; to his Honour and Glory, and your own unspeakable Comfort ; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer ! So prays

Your sincere Well-Wisher and Friend,

Oct. 23, 1770.

THE AUTHOR.

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A N
E S S A Y
O N T H E
H O L Y S A C R A M E N T
O F T H E
L O R D ' S S U P P E R .

C H A P. I.

*On the Nature, End, and Design of the Holy
Communion.*

WE read in Moses's Account of
the Creation, that *God creat-
ed Man in his own Image*, Gen. i. 27.
by which we are to understand, that
our first Parents, Adam and Eve, were
created holy and upright, with a
perfect Knowledge of their Duty,
B and

and a Power, through the divine Blessing, to perform it. In this Condition they were placed in Paradise, in a State of Trial, and no Doubt in the full Enjoyment of Comfort, Peace, and Happiness; with a Promise of Immortal Life, if they should love, honour, and obey their great Creator, but with an express Threatening of Death and Misery, in case of their Disobedience.

In the midst of that Plenty of every thing fit for their Use, wherewith God had blessed them, one Tree only was reserved, whereof they were forbidden to eat, as a Test or Trial of their Obedience. Of this fatal Fruit the Woman (seduced by the Devil in the Form of a Serpent) tasted, and
then

then gave thereof to her Husband, and *he did eat*. Thus did they both wilfully transgress a plain and positive Command of their Maker, and by so doing incurred his most just Displeasure, forfeited all Title to his future Favour, and subjected themselves to that Sentence of Death, and all its dreadful Consequences, with which they had been threatened. Thus *sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin*. Hence human Nature became polluted, and depraved; and from this Fall of our first Parents we may date all that Wickedness and Corruption, which we read, and hear of, and see, in the World, and which we cannot but feel and lament in ourselves. Accordingly we are told, that

Adam begat a Son in his own likeness, after his image, Gen. v. 3. that is, with the same corrupt sinful Nature as his own was now become; and in his Image, as directly opposite and contrary to that Image of God, wherein he was at first created.

How wretched and deplorable a State was Man now reduced to! To live only to sin, and suffer the just Reward of Sin, Death and Misery. Dreadful indeed! Had not our gracious and merciful God provided a Remedy, and in Pity to lost Mankind appointed *the Seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's Head*. Under this Figure was our blessed Redeemer (the Son of God, the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World)

pro-

promised to Adam and his Posterity, to be offered in due Time as a Sacrifice and Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. By virtue of which Sacrifice all Men, from the Beginning to the End of all things, are entitled to Pardon, and assured of eternal Happiness in the Life to come, on Condition of their Repentance, Faith, and Obedience—as in *Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*. Now in order to imprint in the Minds of our first Parents, and of their Posterity after them, a deep Sense of their own Unworthiness, and of God's great Goodness, and to keep up a lively Faith in the promised Redeemer; Sacrifices were appointed, and continued ever after until

til the Coming of Christ, as a principal Part of religious Worship. By these every faithful Servant of God was instructed in the heinous Nature of Sin, and the Necessity of an Atonement for it: which Atonement was to be made, not by any Virtue or Efficacy in the Sacrifices themselves, but only by that all-sufficient Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, which these were designed to foreshew, and represent. For the same Reason, since the Coming of our blessed Saviour, we Christians are commanded to keep up a constant and grateful Remembrance of what he has done and suffered for us, in the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Bread which we break is to remind

us of his Body having been broken or crucified for us; and the Wine poured out to represent to us his most precious Blood, which was shed for our Redemption, and to make an Atonement for our Sins. And this is undoubtedly the original and principal Design of the holy Sacrament, *viz.* to be a standing Memorial and Representation of our Lord's Death and Sufferings, unto the End of the World, *For*, as St. Paul says, *as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death, 'till he come*: That is, 'till his second Coming to Judgment.

But *2dly*, it may be considered as a Sign or Token of present Graces; that is, of the gracious Influences of
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the holy Spirit, which our Saviour has promised to all such as shall seek for them by fervent Prayer, and the diligent Use of this Sacrament. Of ourselves we are utterly unable to please God. *In our Flesh*, the Scripture tells us, *dwelleth no good thing*; that is, in our natural fallen State we have no Power to do what is good, or avoid what is evil; but *are dead in Trespasses and Sins*; yet the same Scripture assures us, that *we can do all things thro' Christ, that strengtheneth us*; that is, we can do all things necessary to our Salvation, by the Help of the holy Spirit, given us by Christ. The Blessings derived to us from which Spirit are very aptly and properly represented by the Bread and Wine

Wine in the Holy Sacrament. For as Bread is the great strengthener of our Bodies, and support of our animal Life, so does the divine Spirit strengthen and animate our Souls, and maintain us in our spiritual Life. As Wine is the sovereign Cordial that revives our Spirits, and invigorates our Bodies, so does the Grace of God comfort and refresh our Souls, and keep us from fainting in our spiritual Warfare against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Nor is the Sacrament to be considered only as a Sign or Memorial of the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, and of the Benefits procured us thereby, but also as a Means or Instrument of conveying those benefits to every faithful

faithful and 'worthy Receiver, (of which I shall treat more fully in the third Chapter.) Moreover, it may be looked upon as a Pledge, or Earnest, of our future Glory and Happiness ; of which indeed we have numberless Promises, throughout the Gospel, from Him who had *the Words of eternal Life*, and whose *Word is Truth*.—And that these Promises might make the deeper Impression on us, and be ever fresh in our Minds, he has instituted the holy Sacrament as a Pledge to assure us of his Performance of them *in due Season, if we faint not*.—Thus does our blessed Master, by these visible Signs and Tokens, graciously vouchsafe to quicken our Hopes, and animate
our

our Faith, 'till the one shall be lost in Vision, and the other swallowed up in Enjoyment. For *when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*—Then shall the means of Grace cease, when the End shall be obtained, and the hope of Glory vanish, when that Glory itself shall be revealed and imparted to us: when we shall enter on our eternal Inheritance, of such Blessings as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive, which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

From the View we have now taken of the blessed Sacrament, we are naturally led to consider it as a
 Confir-

Confirmation of the new Covenant, whereof Christ is the Mediator, being purchased and procured for us by his Death and Sufferings—So our Lord himself tells us: *This Cup, says He, is the new Testament* (or Covenant, as it should more properly be rendered) *in my Blood, which is shed for you.* Luke xxii. 20. In this Covenant God is graciously pleased to promise us Pardon of our past Sins, present Grace, and future Happiness, on Condition of our hearty Repentance, and sincere Faith and Obedience:—Into this Covenant we were first admitted at our Baptism, which is called by St. Peter (in respect to our part of the Engagement) *the Answer of a good Conscience towards God;*

God: wherein we were made *Children of Christ, Heirs of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Now all these great and glorious Privileges, originally conferred on us in the Sacrament of Baptism, are confirmed to us in that of the Lord's Supper on God's part, at the same time that we renew our Promise to fulfil the Conditions required on our's.

Lastly, this holy Sacrament may be considered as a Sign of our Communion and Fellowship one with another. For, says St. Paul, *we being many are one Bread and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* 1 Cor. x. 17. As all Christians, high and low, rich and poor, make up one Body, of which our Saviour
Christ

Christ is the Head, and one Family, of which he is the Master, so are we all commanded to eat at one Table, of one Bread, and to drink of one Cup, as a Sign of that mutual Love and Charity, which ought ever to subsist among us, and without which he will never own us as his Members, or Servants.

To sum up what has been said in few words—This holy Sacrament (which is indeed the very Badge of our Christianity) was instituted to represent, and put us in continual Remembrance of, the great sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross; the Foundation of all our hopes of Pardon and Happiness. It was designed to signify to us the Efficacy and Necessity of
of

of the holy Spirit of God, to assist us in our Duty, and enable us to work out our Salvation. It was also appointed as a principal means of conveying these Benefits to us ; and as a Pledge of our future Glory, and of eternal Life.—Lastly, in this sacred ordinance we renew the Covenant entered into at our Baptism, and certify our Love and Charity one towards another.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

On the Necessity of our receiving the Sacrament in order to our Salvation.

THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE
OF ME. Luke xxii. 19. These
words of our blessed Saviour (spoken
when he first instituted the Sacra-
ment, and was going to die for our
Sins) do certainly shew the Necessity
of our receiving it, better than all
other Arguments whatsoever—For
here is a plain and positive Command
of Him, who has an undoubted
Right to command us ; of our great
Master and Redeemer, our Lord and
our God. And that it was intended
to

to be of perpetual Force and Obligation to the End of the World, appears very plainly from what follows in St. Paul's account of the Institution (which he received by immediate Revelation from Christ himself) where he says ; *After the same manner also he took the Cup, when he had supped, saying—This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood: this do ye as oft as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me: For as often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death, 'till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 25. 26. These Words also plainly shew, that the holy Sacrament was to be received *often*: and so the Disciples and first Christians understood them, making it a constant Part of

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their religious Worship. Accordingly we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. xi. 42. that *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in BREAKING OF BREAD* (that is, receiving the Sacrament) *and in Prayers.*—Indeed, in those early Ages a Man would have been looked upon as no Christian, who refused to join in the holy Communion;—And let us remember, my dear Brethren, that the very same Obligation lies upon us, as did upon them—We have all one Saviour, *Jesus Christ; the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*—But can we hope to be saved by him, while we live in wilful and open Disobedience to one of his Commands? Can we expect to partake of
the

the benefit of his Sacrifice, while we refuse to remember it in the manner he himself has appointed?—Let us not deceive ourselves—If we will enter into Life, we must keep the Commandments — Our Obedience must be general, to *all* the Precepts of the Gospel, without Exception — *Whosoever, says St. James, shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* Now Christ has ordained two Sacraments in his Church, and strictly commanded us to observe them, as means of Grace, and Conditions of our Salvation. These are Baptism, and the Lord's Supper—They are therefore necessary on two Accounts; as means of Grace, that is, of procuring and applying to us

the Benefits of our Saviour's death, and the Assistance of his Holy Spirit ; and likewise as being his exprefs and positive Commands. You all observe one of these Sacraments, Baptism—and so far you do well—You think it necessary—and doubtless it is so:—Why then will you not observe the other, which is equally commanded, and therefore equally necessary ? In short, our Duty in this case is plain and clear ; and if we persist in our Disobedience to our gracious Redeemer, we infallibly forfeit his Favour, do in effect renounce our Christianity, and shall find, when it is too late, that to us *Christ is dead in vain.*

C H A P. III.

Of the Benefits arising from a frequent and devout Attendance on the Lord's Supper.

HAVING, I hope, fully convinced you of the Necessity of receiving the Sacrament in order to your Salvation, I should think it almost needless to add any thing to persuade you to a frequent and devout Attendance on it. However, as a further motive and encouragement, it may be proper to shew you the reasonableness and usefulness of this Duty, by laying before you the great Benefits arising from a due Performance of it. And first, we
may

may well apply to this what the Psalmist says of God's Laws in general, Pf. xix. 11. that *in keeping of them there is great Reward*—As sure as God is true, so surely will he reward those who obey his Commands; generally in this Life with that Comfort and Peace of Mind, which the World cannot give, and certainly with eternal Joy and Happiness in the Life to come. But to be more particular—The Benefits of a devout attendance on the holy Communion are many and various—The first and principal is, its being a means of conveying to us the Blessings obtained by the Death and Sacrifice of Christ—according to that memorable saying of St. Paul, 1 Cor. x. 16.

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The Cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? Which Words are generally understood to signify, that by a faithful and devout Participation of the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper, we do indeed partake of his most blessed Body and Blood, which they are designed to represent; that is, of all those spiritual Blessings procured for us by his Body broken, and his Blood shed for our sakes—Then (as our Church expresses it, almost in the very Words of Scripture) we spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ, and drink his Blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us—

Then

Then are our Souls fed and nourished with their proper Food and Sustenance ; as necessary for them, as Bread is for the Support of our Bodies—Thus united to Christ, our Head, we become in some Sense partakers of a divine Nature, receiving from him such Communications of the Holy Spirit, as he sees needful for us, to help our Infirmities, and enable us to perform our Christian duty—Accordingly, the Apostle says 1 Cor. xii. 13. *We have been all made to drink into one Spirit*—plainly alluding to our drinking of the Wine in the holy Sacrament. And, indeed, if even to private Prayer our Saviour has annexed a Promise, that *his Heavenly Father will give his Holy Spirit to them*
that

that ask him, Luke xi. 13. and if all publick Devotions, being of divine Appointment, have a greater assurance of God's Blessing attending them; how much more, in this most solemn of all religious Actions, may we expect that he will graciously vouchsafe us the blessed Influences of his Holy Spirit? Not that we are to judge of them by any inward Feelings or rapturous Transports (as Enthusiasts do vainly boast, thereby deceiving themselves and others) but by the Effects of an holy and virtuous Life, and an improvement in all Christian Graces. These are the Fruits of the Spirit; and the only sure Signs of our having received it, and being under its holy Direction

tion—And these Fruits it will infallibly produce in us, if we are constant and diligent in using the appointed means of obtaining them; which are Prayer, and the holy Sacrament.

But besides these spiritual Benefits of a frequent and devout Attendance at the Lord's Table, there are others which flow from it in a natural way; as it tends to raise and cherish in our Minds pious Thoughts, and devout Affections; to inspire us with a Love of God; to keep us stedfast in our Faith in Christ; and to give us a just Hatred and Abhorrence of all Sin and Wickedness. The Love of God is the noblest Principle of our Obedience: It is called by our blessed Saviour,

Saviour, *the first and great Commandment*—And what so natural and likely to raise this Love in us, as the Consideration of that great and astonishing instance of his Love to us, in sending his only Son into the World, to die for our Sins, and to make us Heirs of eternal Life? *Herein is Love, says St. John, not that we loved God, but that he loved us—And again: We love him, because he first loved us.* Now as often as we receive the Pledges of his Love in the holy Communion, we have there set before us the strongest motives that can be to Love and Gratitude on our parts; which surely cannot fail to make suitable and lasting Impressions in the Breast of every faithful

faithful Communicant. The frequent use of this Ordinance must likewise naturally confirm and establish us in a lively Faith in Christ, who is therein as it were set forth crucified before us; an humble Reliance on his Merits, which we there plead to our heavenly Father; and a steady hope of Salvation thro' him, as our only Redeemer. It must also give us the strongest Hatred and Detestation of Sin, when we reflect, that no less an Expiation than the Sacrifice of the Son of God was necessary to atone for the Sins of his fallen Creatures: In short, every Sentiment of Humanity and Devotion, every Disposition
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to Piety and Goodness, is naturally excited in us by a frequent Attendance on the holy Sacrament—It raises our Thoughts from Earth to Heaven; and where our Treasure is, there it causes our Hearts to be also. Lastly, it is a perpetual Source of Comfort to us under all our Miseries and Afflictions, as it fixes our Minds on another and better Life, to which this is but a passage; on that heavenly Country to which we belong: *Where God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes; and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain: for the former Things shall be passed away.* Rev. xxi. 4.—Such are the Benefits arising

arising from frequent and devout Communion—Let us now enquire what Qualifications are necessary on our parts, to fit us for a due Performance of this Duty, and to entitle us to all these Advantages.

C H A P. IV.

*Of the Qualifications necessary to make us
worthy Communicants.*

IN general, whoever is fit to pray, or to join in the common Service of the Church, is fit to receive the holy Sacrament—An Heart properly disposed for Prayer is doubtless at the same Time properly qualified for every other Act of religious Worship: and there is no Qualification requisite for the due Receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is not as necessary for the due Performance of Prayer. Let us then enquire what these Qualifications are, and
 apply

apply them to each Duty respectively—We may reckon them up, I think, under the four following Heads, *viz.* 1st An humble penitent Heart—2^{dly} A firm and sincere Resolution of Amendment and Obedience—3^{dly} A steadfast and lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ, with hearty Thankfulness for his Death—and *lastly*, Love and Charity towards all Men. To consider them each in their order.

Humility I look upon as the Ground-work of all. Now, by Humility I do not mean what is commonly understood by it, as it respects our Behaviour towards one another (tho' in that Sense indeed it is a very important part of Christian Duty)
but

but by Humility, as the Word is generally used in Scripture, is to be understood that humble Disposition of the Heart towards God, that Lowliness of Mind, that Poverty of Spirit, which is so essential to true Piety, and so distinguishing a mark of a good Christian. It consists in a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness, of our natural Prone-ness to Sin, and Aversion to Holiness, and of our utter Inability of ourselves to please God—It is, in the Language of Scripture, that broken Heart and contrite Spirit, of which so many excellent Things are spoken, and to which so many gracious Promises are annexed, both in the Old and New Testament—*The Lord is*

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nigh

nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit. Ps. xxxiv. 18. The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Ps. li. 17. Again, the Prophet Isaiah, speaking in the Person of Christ, says; The Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted—Is. lxi. 1.—And, To this Man will I look, says the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word — Is. lxvi. 2. Agreeably to these Declarations, our blessed Lord begins his Sermon on the Mount with the same Doctrine—Blessed, says he, are the Poor in Spirit, for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matt.

Matt. v. 3. And both St. James and St. Peter (referring to a Passage in the Proverbs, Ch. iii. 34.) assure us, that *God resisteth the Proud, but giveth Grace unto the Humble*—It is this same Humility, and its opposite Pride, which are so strongly marked out to us in that most striking and instructive Parable of the Pharisee and Publican (Luke xviii. 10. and so on)—The former, trusting in his own Righteousness, proud of his Attainments, and boasting of his Merit, was rejected, and his Prayers refused Admission: while the humble Publican, conscious of his Unworthiness, confessing his Sins, and relying wholly on God's Mercy and Goodness, was graciously accepted.

Nearly allied to Humility is Penitence: Indeed they may be looked upon as inseparable. For whoever has his Mind deeply impressed with a Sense of his Sins, will naturally be sorry for them, and lament them before that Being, who alone can help him—With David he *will acknowledge his Transgressions, if his Sin is ever before him.* From what has been said, and indeed from the whole Tenor of the Sacred Writings, it appears how indispensibly necessary an humble penitent Heart is to make our Prayers acceptable to God—And it is no less plain, how peculiarly needful it is to make us fit for the Holy Communion, which is intended to set before us in the strongest
 Light

Light the Wretchedness of our Condition by Nature, to remind us of our Sins, and to convince us of the Necessity of a Redeemer in order to our Pardon and Salvation.

2. The second necessary Qualification is a firm and sincere Resolution of Amendment and Obedience: For we must not only *cease to do Evil*, but *learn to do well*—This is indeed the natural Effect, and genuine Fruit of Godly Sorrow; this is that true Repentance, the Scripture speaks of, *not to be repented of*: Without which all Confession of Sin would be no more than an empty Form, and all our Prayers a Mockery of God, and downright Hypocrisy—*The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord;*

Lord; but the Prayer of the Upright is his Delight. Prov. xv. 8. No less necessary is the same Resolution of Amendment and Obedience to make us worthy Partakers of the Holy Sacrament. For in vain do we plead his Merits, who came to destroy the Works of the Devil (that is all Sin and Wickedness) for the Pardon of our past Offences, unless we are fully determined to forsake them for the future—In vain do we use those Means of Grace to assist us in all Holiness and godly Living, unless we firmly resolve to join our own hearty Endeavours for the same Purpose, and thereby to *work out our own Salvation.*

But

3. But as our best Actions are imperfect, and of themselves can never entitle us to the divine Favour; as *in many Things we offend all*, and shall continue to be more or less Sinners, so long as we live in this frail State; so there is another most necessary Qualification to render our Prayers, as well as our Communion, acceptable to God; which is a stedfast and lively Faith in his Mercy thro' Christ. *Without Faith*, says the Apostle to the Hebrews, *it is impossible to please him: For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. xi. 6.—And St. James, speaking of Prayer, says; *Let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering* Ja. i. 6.—But Faith
in

in God's Mercy *in general* is not sufficient—It must be Faith in his Mercy *thro' Christ*, that will make the Worship of Christians acceptable—For in him *he has reconciled the World unto himself, and thro' him alone we have Peace with God*—He is our Sacrifice, our Mediator, and Advocate: The Foundation of our Faith, our Hope, and Confidence—*I am*, says our Blessed Lord, *the Way, the Truth, and the Life: No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* John xiv. 6. *I am the Door: by me if any Man enter in, he shall be saved.* John x. 9. This Faith therefore is the very Essence of Christianity—and is necessary to make our Prayers acceptable, as they must be offered up in the Name, and thro' the Mediation

diation of Christ ; and to make us worthy Partakers of the Holy Sacrament, wherein we profess to rely wholly on God's Mercy thro' our said gracious Redeemer—To this Faith hearty Thankfulness must be added. And surely whoever steadfastly believes in this astonishing Instance of God's Love, shewn us in our Redemption, cannot but feel and express the warmest Sentiments of Gratitude and Adoration.

Thanksgiving is a very material and principal Part of Christian Devotion at all Times, and in all Places ; but more particularly, when we are commemorating the Mercies of God in the Holy Sacrament—For which reason this Office is very properly

properly and emphatically styled, by ancient Writers, the *Eucharist*, which signifies, the giving of Thanks, as our Church calls it, “ Our Sacrifice “ of Praise and Thanksgiving.” And indeed without a thankful Heart, our joining in it can be no better than a Mocking of God, and an Insult on our blessed Redeemer.

4. The fourth and last Qualification I am to consider, is that of Love and Charity towards all Mankind—a most extensive and necessary Duty, to which we are particularly bound by our holy Religion, and without which we are told that all our other Doings will be nothing worth. The Love of God and of our Neighbour are indeed the Sum and Substance
of

of all Religion; *on these two Commandments*, says our Saviour, *hang all the Law and the Prophets*. Matt. xxii. 40.—And to pretend to one without the other, is vain and hypocritical—For the Scripture tells us, *If any Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar*. 1 John iv. 20.—The Nature of this Love, and the particular Duties flowing from it, and comprehended under it, together with our Obligations to the Practice of them, are plainly and clearly set forth to us throughout the whole New Testament. Our Blessed Lord makes it the distinguishing Mark of a true Christian: *By this*, says he, *shall Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to another*. John xiii. 35.

—And

—And one grand Branch of it, the Forgiveness of our Enemies, he has particularly insisted on, in that excellent Prayer he has taught us, wherein he has made it the express Condition of our asking and obtaining Forgiveness of our Sins at God's Hand—*If, says he, ye forgive Men their Trespases, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* Matt. vi. 14. 15.—To the same Purpose is the Parable of the merciless Servant, delivered in the 18th Chapter of St. Matthew.—In short, nothing can be more clear and evident than the Necessity of universal Love and good Will to make our Prayers and Devotions

votions in general acceptable to Almighty God—And as his Love to us in sending his Son into the World to die for our Sins is urged as the grand Motive to us to love one another, (*Beloved if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1 John iv. 11.*) Surely when we commemorate that Love in the Holy Communion, we are more particularly bound to bring with us Hearts full of Love and good Will towards our Brethren.

As to the Necessity of Reconciliation with our Enemies, before we join in this sacred Ordinance, let us remember our Saviour's Admonition in his Sermon on the Mount. Matt. v. 23, 24.—*If thou bring thy*
Gift

Gift to the Altar, and there rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way; first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. It may indeed so happen, that all Men are not actually at Peace with us; we may have Enemies unwilling to be reconciled: But if that is owing to their own Obstinacy and Perverseness, and not to any Backwardness on our Part, it should not give us any Disturbance, or hinder us from communicating—We are only to answer for ourselves. If then we are hearty and sincere in our Love and good Will to all Men, forgiving our Enemies, and doing them Good when fit Opportunities offer;

if

if we make Amends and Restitution, to the utmost of our Power, to all those whom we have injured or offended; in short, if we love, not in Word only, but in Deed and in Truth; then are we properly qualified to partake of the Pledges of God's Love in the Holy Sacrament.

You see now, my good Friends, what are the Qualifications absolutely necessary to make our religious Duties of every kind acceptable at the Throne of Grace. Let us therefore frequently *search and try our Hearts*, in order to know if we are possessed of them—Self-Examination is by no means so laborious and difficult a Task, as some may imagine:

gine: And the oftener we perform it, the easier it will be. It is useful and proper at all Times, but more particularly so, before we go to our publick Devotions, or to the Sacrament—*Let a Man examine himself, says St. Paul, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup* 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the same Rule may very properly be applied to publick Worship in general; to which no one should go careless or unprepared. Let us then examine our Consciences, honestly and fairly, in regard to the Qualifications above mentioned; and we can never be at a loss to know, whether we are fit to pray, or fit to communicate. In this Preparation, you see, there is nothing tedious,

tedious, or difficult, or puzzling; it is, in short, no other than that of an honest humble Heart; a Disposition to believe, and live like a Christian.

As to such pious Persons, as have much spare Time on their Hands, and chuse to spend a large Portion of it in private Meditation and Prayer, before they go to the Sacrament, God forbid that I should discourage them from so useful an Employment—But tho' it may be useful, and in some Cases highly proper, it is by no means necessary in general. The Scripture does not enjoin it—Let me then earnestly advise and entreat such among you, as are in Business, or Service, and

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have not much Time at Command, never to make that an Excuse for not coming to the holy Sacrament—Diligence and Industry in our respective Callings, so far from being an Hindrance, is of itself an excellent Preparative both for Praying and Communicating as we ought; as it is a main Part of our Duty, to be well employed, and keeps us out of many Temptations, which the Idle are exposed to—And be assured, that the longest formal Preparations will avail nothing, in the midst of an uselefs and mispent Life—For to be truly devout and religious, is not to be so by Fits and Starts, and on particular solemn Occasions, but regularly, constantly,

ly,

ly, and uniformly—In a Word, whoever is humble and penitent, and endeavours to do his Duty to the best of his Power, trusting in God's Mercy thro' Christ, and living in perfect Love and Charity with all Men—That is, whoever is a sincere Christian, is at all Times prepared for every Part of Christian Worship, is always fit to pray, and fit to receive the Sacrament—On the other Hand, a wicked impenitent Person is equally unfit for both: His Prayers will be an Abomination unto the Lord, and by going to the holy Communion he will only add Sin to Sin—unless he repent, his Case is truly desperate—He is neither fit to live, nor fit to die.—

C H A P. V.

Objections considered, and answered.

TWO Objections, often urged against going to the Lord's Supper, are in fact answered already—The one is, that it is not a necessary Duty—The other, that it is a Work of great Difficulty, and requires more Time to prepare for it properly, than most Persons can bestow. Now I have shewn you from Scripture, that it is absolutely necessary, being an express Command of our blessed Saviour to all Christians without Exception—I hope

hope too, I have convinced you, that the Examination or Preparation required before-hand is by no means a Work of much Time or Difficulty—So these Objections vanish of course. But it may be objected further, that it is a Duty attended with great Danger; because St. Paul says, *He that eateth and drinketh Unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.* 1 Cor. xi. 29. Now before I explain this Passage, let me only beg your Attention to a plain Question or two—Do you think that God Almighty would give you any Command, which it would be dangerous for you to obey?—Do you imagine, he would lay Snares or Stumbling-blocks

blocks in your Way? or that he would enjoin a Duty as necessary to Salvation, and make your Performance of that Duty expose you to Damnation?—I appeal to yourselves, if this is not too shocking, and even blasphemous to suppose—God forbid we should entertain such a Thought of our merciful and gracious Creator! —But let us proceed to examine the Passage in St. Paul, and the Objection, I am persuaded, will be easily removed—The Case of the Corinthians, to whom he was writing, was very particular, and quite different from any that can happen in our religious Assemblies—It was usual in those Times to have what they called their Feasts of Charity
 accompany

accompany the Celebration of the Lord's Supper: Of which Feasts all Christians, of every Rank and Condition, were to partake without Distinction, only with strict Temperance and Moderation. Now the Corinthians had grossly abused this pious and benevolent Institution:

First, By shutting out the Poor (for whose Benefit it was principally designed) and then by eating and drinking to Excess: so that they were guilty of two great Crimes; want of Charity, and Intemperence—And to encrease their Guilt, they partook of the holy Communion in a most riotous and disorderly Manner, without considering the Nature and Importance of the Business

ness they were engaged in, or indeed without distinguishing it from a common Feast—This was such a shocking Abuse and Profanation of this most sacred Ordinance of Religion, as must surely make every serious Christian tremble to think of:—This was, in the strictest sense, *not discerning the Lord's Body*; and as all Sin subjects Men to the wrath and punishment of God, so they who were guilty of this might properly be said to *eat and drink their own Damnation*. But it should be observed, that the Word, which we translate *Damnation*, signifies in the original *Judgment*, or *temporal Condemnation*; as appears from what the Apostle adds in the very next Verse

—For

—*For this Cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*—That is, many among you have been punished by various Diseases, and many by Death, (for that is here meant by sleeping.)

I hope now you are fully satisfied, that there is no Danger of our receiving the Sacrament unworthily, in the same manner that the Corinthians did—But, you may ask, may we not still receive it unworthily, in some other Sense?—Undoubtedly we may; and so we may pray unworthily—Whoever does either carelessly, inconsiderately, or irreverently, does it unworthily—Much more, whoever lives unworthily of his holy Profession, in the habitual
Practice

Practice of any Sin, or the neglect of any Duty; if he presume to enter the House of God, or approach his Altar, does in the highest Sense pray or communicate unworthily; and will thereby most assuredly increase his Condemnation. Let such therefore keep away, 'till they have humbled themselves, with hearty Sorrow for their Sins; and by unfeigned Repentance and Reformation made themselves meet to join in the Congregation of the Faithful.

But let not the honest and sincere Christian be afraid, where no Fear is—Let him not refrain from doing his Duty at God's holy Table because he is fearful he shall not do it so well as he ought—The best of
our

our Services are imperfect—Let him but do it as well as he can; and God's Goodness, and our Saviour's Merits will supply the rest—Trusting in these, let him go boldly to the Throne of Grace; and he will not fail to be graciously received.

Of ourselves indeed we are not worthy of the least of God's Mercies, much less of the great Blessings tendered to us in the holy Sacrament—We are not worthy of the Air we breath, or of the Food we eat—But are we therefore to refuse to live, or refuse to eat? or not to accept of God's Bounty and Goodness, because we are undeserving of them? If this is evidently absurd in all other Cases, why is it not equally so

so in regard to our receiving the Sacrament? Besides, the very Nature of this Duty implies our Unworthiness; and an humble Sense of our Unworthiness is a main Qualification for performing it as we ought. Had Mankind continued holy and innocent, there had been no need of any Redemption, no Sacrifice on the Cross, no Sacrament—It was for Sinners that Christ died, and instituted this Remembrance of his Death and Passion. Unworthy of this amazing Goodness we certainly are, even the very best of us: but that is no reason we should not partake of it, when offered to us, as we most assuredly shall, if we sincerely repent and amend, trusting in

in God's Mercy, and thankfully using those Means of Grace, which he has appointed for our improvement in all virtuous and godly Living.

I proceed now to consider some other Objections, which are indeed very weak and frivolous, and yet I am afraid keep many Persons away from the holy Communion. The first I shall mention relates to the lower set of People, who seem to have a very mistaken Notion, that it is a Duty which belong only to the Wise and Learned, the Rich and Great, and which the Poor have no Concern in; nay, that it would be a kind of Presumption in them to join in it—But surely nothing can be more foolish,
or

or more directly contrary to Scripture and Reason, than this Supposition—For are we not expressly told, that *There is no respect of Persons with God?* that *He regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor; for they all are the Work of his Hands.* Job xxxiv. 19.—Have we not all the same Creator, the same Redeemer, the same Sanctifier? Have we not been all baptized into one Faith? in the same ever-blessed Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? And are we not *then* all equally intitled, and equally obliged, to eat of the same Bread, and drink of the same Cup, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Look into your Bibles—You will find there no Privileges or Benefits

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annext to Riches and Grandeur :
 On the contrary, our blessed Saviour
 often warns us of the Danger at-
 tending them, by their leading us into
 many Temptations, which Poverty
 is not exposed to: And it is very
 remarkable, that in his Answer to
 the Disciples of John the Baptist,
 speaking of his divine Mission, he
 says, that *the Poor have the Gospel*
preached unto them. Neither have
 wordly Wisdom or Learning any
 Promises made them in holy Scrip-
 ture—We are there told, that *the*
Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and
to depart from Evil is Understanding. Job
 xxviii. 28.—And that to *know Jesus*
Christ, and him crucified, is the only
 saving and valuable Knowledge. And
 St.

St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians, says: *For ye see your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called.*

1 Cor. i. 26.—For the Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.

1 Cor. i. 20.—In short, there is no Person so mean and low, so poor and ignorant, but what may know all that is necessary to his Salvation as well as the greatest, and richest, and wisest Man living.

True Religion lies in the Heart, and shews itself in the Fruits of an holy and virtuous Life, not in worldly Wisdom or Learning; much less in Pomp or Splendour—He that is *poor in Spirit*, and *rich in Faith*, and *good Works*, let his Condition in Life
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be what it will, he only is the good Christian, and will not fail to be accepted of God here, and eternally rewarded by him hereafter. Whoever therefore is meet for the Kingdom of Heaven, is certainly fit to join in every Act of religious Worship here on Earth: so that there is no more Reason for you to refrain from the Sacrament on account of your Poverty, than from Prayer, or from coming to Church. To plead such Excuses, is foolish and wicked.—To expect to be saved, without using the Means of Salvation which God has appointed, is indeed the Height of Presumption. But let your Condition be never so low, there can be no Presumption in your receiving

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the Sacrament, if with an honest and humble Heart, and steady Faith, you endeavour to do your Duty in that State of Life, to which God has called you.

Another very weak Excuse, pleaded by some for a Neglect of this Duty, is, that they don't care to be singular or particular. “The generality, say they, of People in our low Condition never go to the Sacrament; and why should we?”—Good God! Are you then afraid or ashamed of being particular in doing your Duty? Or do you regard Men more than God? The Scripture tells us, *We must not follow a Multitude to do Evil*—For the same Reason, We must not follow a Multitude to omit doing what

what is good. In a plain Case, where our Duty is clear, as it is here, to follow bad Examples, will be no Excuse for us; and if a false Shame makes any of you refrain from coming to God's holy Table, let me beg of you seriously to reflect on those awful Words of our blessed Saviour, and to keep them constantly in your Minds. *Whosoever, says he, shall be ashamed of me and of my Words in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Mark viii. 38.

The last Excuse, I shall mention, for not communicating, is, that it is looked upon by some to be a Duty

of so serious and solemn a Nature, as not to be consistent with a lively Temper, and cheerful Disposition. But this is a great Mistake; proceeding from a very wrong Notion of Religion in general, and of this Duty in particular.—Whenever we address ourselves to Almighty God, either in publick or private, whether in the common Service of the Church or in the Sacrament, we cannot be too serious and devout: it would indeed be a great Degree of Profaneness to be otherwise. But then, this is no Hindrance to our being cheerful and pleasant at other Times, and on proper Occasions. It is Superstition, not Religion, that sours Men's Tempers, and disposes them to be gloomy

gloomy and melancholy. True Religion has a natural Tendency to make them cheerful and easy ; happy in themselves, and agreeable to all about them. Indeed there is no such Thing as being truly and constantly cheerful without it. Nor does it by any means forbid a moderate Indulgence in innocent Recreations and Amusements—*There is a Time for all Things* : and the same Person may be at one Time serious, and yet very calm and easy ; and at another Time cheerful, and yet very innocent.—In a Word, my dear Friends, let me only intreat you to make the Trial, and be assured you will find by Experience, that the more truly religious you are, you will be so much the
more

more comfortable and happy; and that the oftener you go to Church, and receive the Sacrament with Piety and Devotion, the more you will be disposed to enjoy every innocent Pleasure of this Life, with a rational Cheerfulness, and grateful Satisfaction. I conclude all with the Words of the inspired Preacher; who speaking of Wisdom or Religion, tells us, HER WAYS ARE WAYS OF PLEASANTNESS, AND ALL HER PATHS ARE PEACE. Prov. iii. 17.

C H A P. VI.

*Directions for a devout Behaviour at Church;
and particularly at the holy Communion,
with some Remarks on the Communion-
Service.*

ONE general Rule to be observed
in all Affairs we are concerned
in, whether of a religious Nature or
not, is to mind what we are about ;
to attend closely and diligently to
that, and that only. The usefulness
and necessity of this Rule in the
common Business of Life is allowed
by every one. Now as Religion is
doubtless the most important Con-
cern

cern of all Men, the Duties of it certainly demand our peculiar Care and Attention. Whenever therefore we worship God, either in private or publick, we should keep our Minds wholly attentive to the solemn Work we are employed in, and intirely disengaged from all worldly Thoughts whatsoever. Particularly, when we go to Church, we should consider before-hand, that we are going to enjoy the greatest Honour and Happiness this World can afford, that of being admitted into the more immediate Presence of Almighty God; into the Palace of the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. We should consider too very seriously the End of our going thither, and the great

Concern

Concern of our Souls in the Business we are there to be employed in ; that we are to confess and bewail our manifold Sins and Transgressions to that Being, who alone can help us ; to implore his Pardon for what is past, and the gracious Assistance of his holy Spirit to amend our Lives for the future ; to thank and praise Him for all the Blessings we have already received, or do now enjoy, or hope for ; and above all, for the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ ; humbly beseeching him that we may receive the Benefit of it in an happy Immortality. Having our Minds duly impressed with these Reflections beforehand, we must be careful not to let them
slip,

slip, during our stay at Church ; but
 to keep both our Eyes and Thoughts
 from wandering ; and let our Beha-
 viour throughout be serious, atten-
 tive, and devout. The excellent
 Service of our Church is most admi-
 rably fitted to help us in maintaining
 a Spirit of true Piety and rational
 Devotion ; and the Rules it pre-
 scribes as to our outward behaviour,
 are no less proper, and ought to be
 carefully observed ; I mean, not on-
 ly in regard to kneeling or standing,
 as we are there directed, but also in
 another particular of no small Con-
 sequence, and yet much neglected,
 that of repeating or not the several
 Parts of the Service after the Minis-
 ter. The Confession and the Lord's-
 Prayer,

Prayer, the whole Congregation is to join in, as in the Litany and some other Parts they are to take their Share, as directed: yet not so loudly as to disturb and confound one another, but (as the Exhortation enjoins) with an humble, or low voice. But as to the Prayers in general, it is the Minister's Business to offer them up singly; and the People should attend to them silently, making them their own by saying an hearty Amen (which signifies *so be it*) at the End of each. This is much more decent and proper than a Custom some Persons have of repeating every Prayer after the Minister—for you may pray very fervently and devoutly with your Hearts, without opening your Lips;

Lips ; nay, I am persuaded, much more so, if you do but keep your Attention fixt to what you are about. The common Service being ended, next follows the Sermon; which you should carefully attend to, as being an Explanation of the Word of God, and intended to instruct you both in Matters of Faith and Practice. Instead therefore, of criticizing and making your Remarks upon the Preacher (as the Manner of too many is) you should endeavour to profit and improve by his Discourse ; as you certainly may, if it is not your own Fault. And now to come to the last and most material Part of all, the Communion-Service, than which nothing surely was ever better calculated

culated for the Purpose of true Devotion, being wonderfully expressive of all that Humility, Penitence, Faith, Gratitude, and Charity, which should fill the Breast of every devout Communicant.

Be careful then, to come with such good Dispositions, praying earnestly to Almighty God, to keep them fresh in your Minds; and by his Grace, and your own strict Attention to the Office of the Church, you will not fail to perform this Duty acceptably to him, and to your own great Benefit and comfort. If you join heartily and sincerely in the common Service, you will find this an excellent Help towards keeping your minds properly disposed
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for that of the Communion. In both you should avoid all coldness and indifference on the one Hand; and on the other, you should not aim at any violent Emotions or rapturous Heights of Devotion, but rather endeavour to preserve an even regular Piety; and if you are sincere and attentive, some Warmth and Earnestness will naturally follow. The main Point is, to be deeply affected with a Sense of your own Unworthiness, and of God's great goodness in appointing, and our blessed Redeemer's Mercy in giving himself, a Sacrifice for our Sins—These and such-like Meditations should be more or less our daily Employment, but particularly when
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we are about to partake of the Memorials of our Redemption at God's holy Table. The Service of our Church (that Part of it, I mean, in which the Communicants alone are concerned) begins with the Offertory, or a Collection for the Poor, in Imitation of a very ancient and laudable Practice; Almsgiving being a very proper Attendant on Prayer in general, and more especially on this solemn Ordinance. Several sentences of Scripture are now read to excite us to this Branch of Christian Charity, which we should seriously attend to; giving according to our Abilities, and always remembering what the Word of God assures us of, that *He that giveth unto the Poor, lendeth*

unto

unto the Lord, and what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.

We are in the next Place called upon to exercise another Part of Christian Love or Charity, in praying for the whole state of Christ's Church *militant* here on Earth. The word *militant* signifies, being in a State of Warfare, and is applied to the present State of the Church in this Life, on account of its being exposed to many Dangers and Difficulties, and having many Enemies and Temptations to strive and contend with: which those good Christians who shall have overcome, having fought the good Fight, shall become Members of the Church *triumphant* in Heaven.

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In this excellent and comprehensive Prayer, we first beg God's gracious acceptance of our Alms, and of our Prayers in general, particularly of those we are now going to offer up to him. We then pray for the whole Church of Christ, that all Members of it may live in true Faith, and constant Obedience to their great Master, and in Unity and godly Love one with another. In the next place, according to the Scripture-rule, we pray for all Christian Kings and Princes, especially our own most gracious Sovereign, and such as are in authority under him, " that they may truly and *indifferently*, that is, *impartially*, minister justice, &c. Then follows a Petition for the Clergy; and

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lastly

lastly for the People in general, that God would bestow on us the greatest of all Blessings here on Earth, his spiritual Grace, to prepare and qualify us for his Kingdom in Heaven. We then recommend to his Pity and Mercy all that are in Want or Affliction, thanking him for having released such of his faithful Servants, as are departed from the miseries of this Life, and beseeching him to enable us to follow their Example, and be for ever happy with them in the Life to come. Before I proceed, permit me to make one Remark on this Prayer, which may be applied to our Prayers in general, and particularly to those of our Church, which is this—(I will give it you in the Words
of

of the admirable Bishop *Taylor*)

“ Let every Man study his Prayers,
and read his Duty in his Petitions.”

It is indeed one great End and Use of Prayer, to keep up in our Minds a just Sense of our Duty, both to God and Man; and it must be our constant Endeavour, if we would have our Prayers heard, to regulate our Behaviour accordingly. To instance in the Prayer now before us, we pray that all Christians may “ live in Unity and godly Love”—Now if at the same Time we live in Enmity, Strife, Variance, Revenge, or any other uncharitable Disposition, is not this downright Hypocrisy? do we not stand self-condemned? how careful then should we be, that our Hearts

and Lives correspond with our Petitions, and that we be shining Examples of that Unity and godly Love, which we pray may prevail universally?—So likewise when we pray for our gracious King, and all that are in Authority under him, how should this inspire us with the warmest Sentiments of Duty and Loyalty to him, and of Obedience to our Governors in general; and make us detest and abhor that Spirit of Faction and Disaffection, I had almost said of Rebellion, which has of late so unhappily prevailed, to the Confusion of all Order and Decency, and the Scandal of our holy Profession? Our blessed Saviour and his Apostles, both by their Precepts and Examples,

Examples, enjoined the strictest Obedience to the higher Powers ; even when they were Heathens and Persecutors of the Christian Faith ; and shall not we pay the same Obedience to our Rulers, who are the Guardians and Defenders of it ?—In short, we cannot be good Christians, if we are not good Subjects.—But to return from this Digression — After the Prayer for the Church militant, follows an Exhortation (the third in our Prayer-book) full of excellent Instruction, to which you should most seriously attend. It is designed to shew us the great Benefits of receiving the Sacrament worthily, and wherein such a worthy receiving consists ; and also the Danger of receiving

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ing it unworthily, and the sure Way to prevent it. All this has been so fully explained to you in the foregoing Chapters, that I need not, I presume, say any Thing more on the Subject in this Place. You have been told what Qualifications are necessary to make you worthy Communicants ; if you come with these, you cannot fail to reap all the Benefits, and escape the Danger here mentioned. Be not therefore terrified or alarmed at hearing this Exhortation, but proceed, as it goes on to direct you “ to give most humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for their amazing Love to Mankind in the Redemption of the World by our Saviour Christ,

both

both God and Man." Lift up your Hearts with the warmest Gratitude and most affectionate Devotion, to your Creator, your Redeemer and Sanctifier, by whom you have been saved from Death and Misery, and made capable of eternal Life and Happiness. And in particular, thank your gracious Redeemer for his infinite Condescension and Love in taking our Nature upon him, and submitting to a cruel and ignominious Death for our Sakes—and also for a further Instance of his Kindness, in appointing these Memorials of his Death and Sufferings, and Pledges of his Love, " to our great and endless Comfort." You must likewise steadfastly resolve and promise " to submit

mit yourselves wholly to his holy Will and Pleasure, studying to serve him in true Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of your Life." And to shew that we join heartily in these Resolutions and Thanksgivings, we are directed to say Amen at the End of this Exhortation. Then follows a shorter one, reckoning up in few Words the Qualifications requisite for a worthy Communicant, and directing us to join humbly and devoutly in that excellent Confession which comes next to be considered—and which we are to repeat after the Minister.

As an humble Penitent Heart,
deeply affected with a Sense of our
Unworthiness, and Sorrow for our
Sins,

Sins, is the first Thing needful to make our Devotions acceptable to our offended God ; so they should always begin with an Expression of that Humility and Sorrow in an humble Confession. This therefore is very properly made the first Part of the common Service of our Church, and is so material an one, that we should always take Care to come in Time to join in it. The Communion-Service being distinct from the rest, and requiring the deepest Humility and most unfeigned Repentance in all that attend it, we are here with the greatest Reason called upon to renew our Confession, and bewail our Sins again, in that most admirable Form now before us—which is
so

so plain, so full, so expressive, that I think you cannot fail to understand it. Let me only advise you to make it the frequent Subject of your Meditations, by reading it often over, and considering every Part of it carefully in private ; and then you will be the more ready to use it properly and devoutly in publick. When the Minister begins, be sure you attend with more than ordinary Devotion, repeating every Word after him slowly and distinctly. Consider yourself as a grievous Sinner, unworthy of the least of God's Mercies, and yet going to partake of the greatest. Consider who it is you have offended, " the Maker of all Things, and Judge of all Men"—that Almighty

mighty Being, who can punish his guilty Creatures with instant Destruction, or everlasting Misery, which as Sinners we justly deserve. But consider him too as the God of Mercy, as well as Justice, the “ Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who of his infinite Goodness has sent his Son to die for our Sins, and reconcile us to his offended Majesty. Reflect then on the heinous Nature of Sin in general, and on your own Sins in particular, “ which you from time to time most grievously have committed”—think what base Ingratitude you have been guilty of to your heavenly Father, your greatest Friend and Benefactor; and what a return you have made for all his Mercy
and

and Goodness. Think in what a Variety of Ways you have offended him, “ by Thought, Word, and Deed, provoking most justly his Wrath and Indignation against you.” And if you are conscious of any particular Sins you have more than usual offended in, bewail these with particular Earnestness and Sorrow.

In the Words of the Confession, we must “ earnestly repent, and be heartily sorry for these, and all our Misdoings, the Remembrance of them must be grievous unto us, and the Burthen of them intolerable.”

Thus self-convicted of our Guilt, obnoxious to the Wrath and Punishment of that God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and
utterly

utterly unable of ourselves to do any Thing to appease his Anger, or avert his Judgments, we can only throw ourselves upon his Mercy, however undeserving—" Have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon us, most merciful Father !"—But how shall we dare to expect, or even ask for that Mercy, to which we can have no Title of ourselves, after our repeated Transgressions ?—Through Christ we may still expect it, and if it be not our own Fault, shall most certainly obtain it. Let us therefore devoutly go on, in full Assurance of Faith, " For thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's Sake, forgive us all that is past." But as it is in vain to lament, or ask Forgiveness of our past Sins, without
 resolving

resolving to avoid them for the future, and as the best Resolutions and Endeavours of us frail Mortals would be weak and ineffectual, without the gracious Assistance of God's holy Spirit, we in the last Place humbly implore this in the following Words, " Grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of Life, to the Honour and Glory of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord"—Amen.

Now follows the Absolution, the Delivery of which is a peculiar Part of the Priest's Office, to be pronounced by him alone, standing, the People still kneeling. It is here in a somewhat different Form from that used in the Common Service; but the

the Design is the same in both ; to wit, to assure us of God's Pardon, on Condition of our true Faith and sincere Repentance. To give you as clear a Notion of this Matter as I can —The Word Absolution signifies Properly, a setting loose or deliverance ; and is here to be understood in the same Sense as Pardon, or a delivering of us from the Bondage, the Guilt, and Punishment of Sin. We are all by Nature vile Sinners, and by our actual Transgressions Rebels against the Great King and Lord of the Universe, and utterly unworthy of his Mercy and Forgiveness : which however he has graciously promised us, for the Sake of his dear Son, on Condition of our Faith and Repentance.

Repentance. Now this Pardon, or Act of Grace, is proclaimed and delivered to us by the Priest, as God's Herald or Minister, agreeably to the Commission given by Christ to his Apostles, and thence derived to the Christian Priesthood in all future Ages; and we are to consider it as coming from God himself, who alone can forgive Sins. The Priest has no such Power; neither indeed can he apply God's Pardon absolutely or discretionally to any particular Person or Persons; because he cannot see into the Heart, nor consequently know who is qualified to receive it and who not. It is sufficient for us, and should afford us the greatest Comfort, to be assured that God, to whom

whom all Hearts are open, will undoubtedly confirm and ratify this Pardon to all such as he sees fit for it ; that is, to all sincere Penitents and true Believers. The Absolution now before us is in the Form of a Prayer, addressed to God, by the Priest only, on our Behalf, and is therefore very different from other Prayers, which are the joint Petitions of the Minister and Congregation: so that for us to join in this, or repeat it after him, would be highly absurd. We are indeed the Persons interested in it, and should attend to it most seriously and devoutly ; declaring our Assent by an hearty Amen! which is as much as to say, " Vouchsafe, O merciful God, to hear the

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Prayer

Prayer of thy Minister, now offered
 up for us thy unworthy Servants,
 who have confessed our Sins unto
 thee; and grant, upon our true Re-
 pentance, that this Pardon may re-
 main with us now and for evermore,
 for the Sake of Jesus Christ our Lord."

I do not mean that we are to repeat
 these Words after the Absolution
 (which the Time would not permit)
 but only that when we say Amen
 after it, which we ought to do most
 heartily, we should lift up our Souls
 to God in such Thoughts as these
 Words express. The Priest having
 thus prayed for our Pardon, and as
 it were proclaimed it to us from the
 Throne of Grace, proceeds to give us
 still stronger Assurances of it, in the
 Words

Words of Truth itself; reading the four Sentences of Scripture, which contain the very Charter of our Salvation. “Hear, says he, what comfortable Words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him,” *Come unto me, all that travel, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.* Mat. xi. 28. Words of Comfort indeed! which speak Peace to the afflicted Soul, labouring under the Burthen of its Sins. Let us then with Hearts full of Joy and Gratitude accept this gracious Invitation of our blessed Redeemer: Let us go unto him in full Assurance of Faith, trusting to his Merits for the Pardon of our past Sins, and resolving to forsake them, and to live henceforth

as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord. Again: *So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the End that all that believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life, John iii. 16.* Amazing Love! to rescue us from eternal Misery, and raise us to everlasting Life! Us, who were guilty Sinners, and Enemies to God, unworthy of the least of his Favours. Behold! God manifest in the Flesh! behold him dying on the Cross, to save us from Ruin, and make us for ever happy with himself in Heaven! His Words are true: his Promises are sure—Let us believe, obey, and be thankful.



Next

Next follows a Passage from St. Paul—*This is a true Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners,* 1 Tim. i. 15. Let us all, with the firmest Faith and most hearty Gratitude, receive this true Saying, delivered to us from the holy Spirit of Truth itself; admiring the Love and Condescension of Him, who being God, submitted to become Man for our Sakes; who left the Bosom of his Father, the Regions of Bliss and Glory, to undergo the Miseries of a painful Life, and a cruel ignominious Death, for the Salvation of us his sinful Creatures. Let us ever adore his Goodness, and rejoice with Joy unspeakable, submitting ourselves
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in all Things to his Will and Pleasure, and studying to serve him in true Holiness all the Days of our Life.

The fourth and last Sentence is taken from St. John—*If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John ii. 1, 2. And what Man is there that liveth and sinneth not? None surely—Both Scripture and Experience teach us this sad Truth, that we are all guilty Offenders. But though *we are sinful, he is righteous*—though we are unworthy, God is merciful—Though we have no Merits of our own to plead, our Saviour's we may most effectually: He is our Advocate,

Advocate, and will plead our Cause for us—and the Success of his pleading we cannot doubt of. Trusting therefore in his Merits, let us with hearty Repentance, and firm Resolutions of future Obedience, *return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon us, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Such Reflections as these must naturally arise in the Breast of every one that comes properly disposed to receive the holy Communion, and attends devoutly to the Sentences above recited ; than which none could have been chosen more fit to fill our Minds with humble Confidence in God's Mercy, with joyful Gratitude, and pious Adoration.

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The Priest now bids us, “ Lift up your Hearts”—Let us, with the utmost Sincerity, make Answer, “ We lift them up unto the Lord”—He then goes on, “ Let us give Thanks unto our Lord God”—Let us joyfully reply, “ It is meet and right so to do.” And now, having our Thoughts fixt on Heaven, and our Hearts filled with devout Affections and Gratitude, let us attend to the Priest, while he addresses Almighty God at his holy Table, in that solemn Form of Thanksgiving—“ It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times and in all Places, give Thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty

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ty everlasting God" (here we may secretly say Amen.)

After which, on particular Festivals, follows a Preface suitable to the Occasion, which the Minister is to repeat alone, the People attending—And then let us all, both with Heart and Voice, join in that most noble and heavenly Hymn of Praise and Thanksgiving, in which we, that now dwell on Earth, unite our Praises with the Inhabitants of Heaven ; and which God grant we may all sing together in those Mansions of Joy and Glory, to all Eternity!—
 “ Therefore, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee,

thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts ! Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high !"—In this sublime Hymn, we laud, or praise God, under the Title of *Lord God of Hosts, (or Armies)* which is often given him in holy Scripture, to denote his Sovereignty, as Creator and Lord of the Universe, from whom the innumerable Hosts of Angels, as well as all other Creatures, derive their Being, and on whom they intirely depend. And we praise him under the triple Appellation of Holy, to signify the Holiness and Purity of his Nature (for he only is holy) and in Acknowledgment of the Mystery of the holy Trinity, or
three

three Persons in one God, revealed to us by the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Into this Faith we have been all Baptized ; in the Name of these three divine Persons we all receive our Blessing at the End of our publick Devotions ; and in the Hymn we are now considering, we praise and adore the same ever-blessed God—our Creator, our Redeemer and Sanctifier ; and in all three Instances (which I beg you to take particular Notice of) we use the Words of Scripture itself. Whoever therefore denies the Doctrine of the Trinity, denies the Word of God ; does in Effect renounce his Baptism, and forfeits his Title to that Blessing, which God alone can bestow, and
which

which he has commanded us to receive in the Name of the same three divine Persons, in which we are, by the same Authority, baptized. Let us all pray to God, that he would keep us stedfast in this Faith, till we join the Host of Angels, and the Church triumphant, in singing Praises to the thrice-Holy in Heaven.—But to proceed in the Communion Service—Lest, after having sung the Song of Angels, we should forget that we are sinful Men, and fancy ourselves in any Sense worthy of the Blessings we are called to partake of, our Church has wisely provided the following admirable Form of Humiliation, wherein we acknowledge our own Unworthiness, and declare
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our intire Trust in God's Mercy for Acceptance. The Priest begins (and let us all with humble and contrite Hearts, devoutly, though silently, join him)—“ We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own Righteousness, but in thy manifold and great Mercies.” Alas ! we have no Righteousness of our own ; our best Deeds are of themselves as *filthy Rags*: it is thy blessed Spirit alone that can lead us in the Way of Holiness, and the Merits of thy Son that must make our imperfect Services well-pleasing in thy Sight—Merit we can have none. We therefore disclaim all Trust in ourselves, all Self-Righteousness ; and humbly prostrate ourselves

ourselves before thee, relying wholly
 on thy Mercy and Goodness, and
 crying out with the Publican in the
 Gospel, "Lord, be merciful unto us
 Sinners, we are not worthy so much
 as to gather up the Crumbs under
 thy Table." So far from being wor-
 thy of the high Honour, and inesti-
 mable Privilege, of being admitted
 as Guests at thy holy Table, we ac-
 knowledge ourselves unworthy even
 of picking up the Crumbs that fall
 from it. *The Wages of Sin is Death*,
 and we all, as vile Sinners, deserve
 it. Yet, O gracious Lord, thou
 feedest us with the Bread of Life,
 and givest us to drink of the Cup of
 Immortality—"Thou art the same
 Lord, whose Property is, always to
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have Mercy." As thy Nature is unchangeable, so is thy Goodness: Before Man had sinned, thou hadst provided a Ransom; and no sooner did he rebel, than thou didst declare thy gracious Promise of Pardon, through him who was to *bruise the Serpent's Head*. Lo! thou art still the same! the promised Seed is long since come! and we fall down before thine Altar to partake of the blessed Sacrifice, provided for our Redemption—"Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his Blood, that our sinful Bodies may be made clean by his Body, and our Souls washed through his most precious Blood; and that we may ever-

more

more dwell in him, and he in us—
 Amen.” Receive therefore, O Lord,
 the humble Supplications of thy un-
 worthy Servants; and grant that we,
 by partaking of this Bread and Wine,
 may so spiritually and through Faith
 partake of his blessed Body and Blood;
 that we may thereby be cleansed from
 all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit;
 and that having his Grace dwelling
 in our Hearts, we may be happily
 united with him now, henceforth,
 and for ever !

I have now, I hope, given you the
 full Sense and Meaning of this ex-
 cellent Prayer, and suggested such
 Thoughts, as I think it must natur-
 ally raise in your Minds, if you at-
 tend to it as you ought. How short,
 and

and yet, how compleat a Form is it of true Christian Humiliation! How wonderfully contrived to subdue every proud and presumptuous Thought, to inspire us with humble Devotion, and so to prepare us for that heavenly Feast, which we are going to partake of!

Next follows the Prayer of Consecration; the Design of which is, to beg God's Blessing on the Elements of Bread and Wine, that by the Operation of his Holy Spirit, he would be pleased to make them, to all faithful Receivers, in a spiritual Sense, the Body and Blood of Christ: that is, in other Words, that they may be a Means of conveying to us the Benefits of the Sacrifice of Christ

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upon

upon the Cross, which they are appointed to represent. In this one most important and comprehensive Petition the whole Prayer centers ; “ that we, receiving these thy Creatures of Bread and Wine, according to thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ’s holy Institution, in Remembrance of his Death and Passion, may be Partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood”—that, while we only see the Shadow, we may by Faith receive the Substance ; and while we only eat and drink the Signs or Memorials, we may partake of the Reality of those Blessings, which they point out to us. And let us not doubt, but earnestly believe, that God will graciously hear this our devout Supplication ;

plication ; and that the same divine Power, which in Baptism sanctifies Water to the washing away of Sin, can, and will, consecrate these his Creatures of Bread and Wine, to be the Means of imparting to us all spiritual Graces, and other Benefits of Christ's Death and Passion. Here then let us secretly say Amen — and while the Priest goes on with the Consecration in the Words of Scripture, let us fix our Thoughts on our blessed Saviour, instituting this holy Sacrament, just before he died for us ; and lift up our Hearts in humble Gratitude and Adoration to him, who was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his most precious Blood. Let us, at the same Time, though silently, beg of God, that

He would send his holy Spirit on the Bread and Wine, now consecrating for our Use ; and when the Minister has finished, let us heartily and devoutly say Amen !

The following Prayers, I think, are the best that can be used, while the Minister and others are receiving —The first is taken from *Wilson*, the other from *Gibson*, both once excellent Prelates of our Church.

Let me advise you to say them softly, slowly, and deliberately; carefully considering every Sentence as you go along—

“ That I am invited to thy Table, is not because I am worthy, but because thou, O God, art infinitely good and kind—Pity my Infirmities,
which

which are known to thee, and accept of my imperfect Obedience to this Command.—I acknowledge my Unworthiness:—I place all my Hopes in thy Mercy and Promises in Jesus Christ. I sincerely purpose to lead a Christian Life, and to use all Diligence to make my Calling and Election sure. With these Purposes I go to thine Altar, trusting in thy Goodness for the Pardon of my Defects, and for an Increase of all those Graces that are necessary to make me more worthy to eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.”

“ I behold by Faith my crucified Lord dying for me, and as my only Saviour and Redeemer I adore and worship him. Q Lord! encrease
and

and enliven my Faith ; and grant that through his Merits, who died and rose again for me, I may receive the Remission of my Sins, and the comfortable Assistance of thy holy Spirit."

If the Communion is large, and the Space long before you go to the Altar, you may lengthen out your Devotions in other Prayers suitable to this Solemnity ; many of which are to be found in sundry Treatises on this Subject—But I must own, I see no Necessity for employing the whole Time in actual Prayer—Let us remember, that God regards the Sincerity of the Heart, much more than the Length of our Petitions. The main Point is, to keep our Minds employed

employed in pious and suitable Meditations, which a devout Communicant can never be at a Loss for. Sorrow for our Sins, hearty Resolutions of Amendment, an earnest Desire of God's Grace, and Faith in his Mercy through Christ, will afford us ample Matter for this Purpose.

Thus then let us employ our Thoughts till we go to the holy Table ; and there let us fix them on our blessed Redeemer, dying for our Sins. When the Minister, as God's Steward, draws near you with the consecrated Bread, attend with all possible Devotion to the Prayer he offers up for you in these Words :
 ‘ The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 which was given for thee, preserve
 thy

thy Body and Soul unto everlasting Life!" Here say with a low Voice, Amen! lifting up your Heart to God in earnest Prayer, that it may be unto you according to these Words—A Seal of your Pardon, and a Pledge of your Salvation. "Take and eat the Bread, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy Heart, by Faith, with Thanksgiving." When the Cup is brought to you, keep your Thoughts fixed as before, on your merciful Redeemer, shedding his Blood for you; attend to the Minister as you did when he brought the Bread, the Prayer being in Effect the same; and say Amen after the Words "everlasting Life"—Then take the Cup,
and

and drink very moderately of the consecrated wine, “ in remembrance that Christ’s Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful”—Then say secretly, “ May the Blood of Christ cleanse me from all Sin!—Blessing, Honour, Glory, Thanksgiving, and Power be unto God, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever! Amen.” Now retire from the Altar, to make room for others; and when you are returned to your Pew, kneel down, and offer up some such Thanksgiving as the following—

“ Praise the Lord! O my Soul; and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name; Praise the Lord! O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: who forgiveth all thine Iniquities,
and

and healeth all thy Diseases : who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction, and crowneth thee with loving Kindness, and tender Mercies—What shall I render unto thee for all thy undeserved Goodness, and for these comfortable Pledges of thy Pardon and Favour, which I have received at thy holy Table ? Accept, O Lord, the Offering of a thankful Heart, and the sincerest Desires and Resolutions to please thee. I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed to keep thy righteous Judgments. O hold thou up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not ; and grant that by the Help of thy Grace I may so love and obey thee in this Life, that in the World to come I may have Life everlasting,

everlasting, through the Merits of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer!"

This, or some such Act of Devotion, may very properly be used, provided there is Time for it before the Post-Communion begins—but by no Means otherwise. For let me beg of you to remember once for all, that your private Prayers should never interfere with the Service of the Church, which is much more edifying and important.

The Moment therefore the Minister begins the Lord's Prayer, after all have communicated, be sure you lay aside all other Books and Devotions, and join fervently with him, in Heart and Voice, in that truly
divine

divine Composition, which is here used with great Propriety, to make our imperfect Prayers acceptable.

In the Prayer next following, we first humbly beseech our heavenly Father, “mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving.” A very proper and necessary Petition for us sinful Creatures, who, conscious of our Unworthiness, and of the Imperfection of our best Services, must trust wholly to the all-sufficient Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, to render this Sacrifice of ours acceptable at the Throne of Grace !

We then proceed to enlarge our Supplications for the whole Christian Church ; that we, and all other
Members

Members of the same may, “ *by the Merits and Death of Christ, and through Faith in his Blood, obtain Remission of our Sins, and all other Benefits of his Passion.*”—This is expressed with great Accuracy and exactness, to shew that our Pardon and Salvation are intirely owing to his Merits and Death, as the only Cause thereof, and that Faith is the Instrument whereby we apply those Blessings to ourselves—For neither our Faith, nor good Works have any Merit, or can give us any Claim to Pardon, though they are indeed, indispensibly necessary as Conditions of our obtaining it.

In the next Place, we go on to a very material Part of our Christian Sacrifice,

Sacrifice, wherein “ we offer up ourselves, our Souls and Bodies to Almighty God, as a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto him”—The Meaning of which is, that we devote and dedicate ourselves intirely to his Service ; promising (as the Scripture expresses it) that we, who *are Christ's*, *will crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*—that we will *mortify our Members which are upon the Earth*—that is, subdue all our irregular Appetites, and forsake all Sin and Wickedness ; living from henceforth as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord.

This is that *living* and *holy* Sacrifice, the Apostle speaks of, (Rom. xii. 1.) without which all other Sacrifices will

will avail us nothing ; and that we may offer it effectually, and be enabled to keep the solemn Vows of Obedience we now make to God, we go on to pray, “ that all we, who are Partakers of this holy Communion, may be fulfilled with his Grace and heavenly Benediction”—without which all our best Endeavours would be vain, and our most solemn Resolutions ineffectual. The Prayer concludes with an humble Acknowledgment of our Unworthiness to offer unto God any Sacrifice, and an earnest Request that he will be pleased nevertheless to “ accept this our bounden Duty and Service, not weighing our Merits, but pardoning our Offences, through Jesus Christ

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our Lord ;” by whom, as our Mediator, we ascribe all Honour and Glory to the “ Father Almighty, in Unity with the Son and Holy Ghost, World without End.”

The other Prayer, which is very seldom used, consists of a Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the Privileges and Benefits we have been made Partakers of at his holy Table ; and a Petition for his Grace, “ that we may continue in that holy Fellowship, and do all such good Works as he has prepared for us to walk in” —From both Prayers we may learn this important Lesson, which should never be out of our Minds, that the Benefit of our communicating to ourselves, as well as its Acceptance with

with God, depends intirely on our future Obedience in a Life of Virtue and Holiness. For this End, we beg the gracious Assistance of his good Spirit, which will never be wanting to those who sincerely pray for it, and use the appointed Means to obtain it. But though without this we can do nothing, yet in order to grow in Grace, we must join our own hearty Endeavours to the divine Power within us; striving to avoid every Sin, and to improve in the Practice of every Virtue. It is true, that we can never arrive at Perfection in all, or in any Part of our Duty in this frail State; but we must be always aiming at it; and if it be not our own Fault, we may, by God's

K Help,

Help, make a great Progress towards it. However, let us not be discouraged, if we do not find so quick and sudden a Change in our Minds, or so thorough a Reformation in our Lives, as we could wish, immediately after receiving the Sacrament—Let us only be sincere and hearty in our Applications to God for his Grace, and go on in a regular and uniform Course of Obedience to his Will, to the utmost of our Power, and we need not fear the Event. “ He is faithful that has promised—and *will never leave or forsake* those who put their Trust in his Mercy.”

In pursuance of the Example of our blessed Saviour, who after he had finished his last Supper with his Disciples,

ciples, sang an Hymn, the Church now directs us to join in that admirable one at the End of the Communion-Service, wherein we sing Praises to God, and to the Lamb, in the most sublime Strains of Rapture and Adoration. It begins with the very Words the Angels used, when they first brought the glad Tidings of our Redemption, at our Saviour's Birth, *praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth, Peace, Good Will towards Men*, Luke ii. 13, 14.

Thus did those blessed Spirits celebrate the divine Mercies, which Man was to receive: and surely we can never more properly join the heavenly Host in this Hymn of

Adoration, than when we have been entertained with that heavenly Food at the Lord's Table. What they saw and celebrated before-hand, is now accomplished ; so that we may with a peculiar Propriety sing Praise and Glory to " God in the Highest," who has, by sending his Son to die for us, made " Peace on Earth," and shewn his " Good Will towards Men."

We then proceed to praise and thank him in a Variety of Words, admirably chosen both to excite and express our warmest Gratitude, and most devout Adoration.

In the next Place, we address ourselves to the blessed Jesus, invoking him as our Redeemer, our Mediator, and Advocate, earnestly imploring
his

his Mercy, and begging him to receive our Prayers: "For thou only art holy"—in and from thyself—Thou art the Fountain of Holiness, whence it must be derived to all created Beings—"Thou only art the Lord"—Thou art by Nature, as well as Office, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*—"Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father"—

Thus ends this excellent Hymn, (composed chiefly of Passages from Scripture) with an Acknowledgment of the Glory of the eternal Trinity, to whom be ascribed all Honour, Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, by the Church, throughout all Ages. Amen!

Immediately

Immediately after this Hymn, is commonly used one of those six Collects which are placed in our Prayer-Book, after the Blessing. They are all very excellent in their Kind, and extremely proper to conclude our Devotions with; and are withal so plain and intelligible, as to need no Explanation. I shall therefore proceed to the Blessing, which closes the whole Service,

It has been the constant Custom in all religious Assemblies, both before and since the coming of Christ, for the Congregation to be dismissed by a solemn Blessing from the Priest. Under the Law there was one appointed by God himself, to be used after the daily Sacrifice, which was
much

much the same in Substance, though in different Words, with what we use under the Gospel, after this our Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving. In both Cases, as I observed to you, in regard to the Absolution, the Priest acts as God's Minister, pronouncing the Blessing in his Name, and by his Authority. We are not, therefore, to think slightly of it, because it is uttered by a frail Mortal like ourselves; but to receive it with all possible Reverence and Thankfulness, as coming from God himself, the Author and Giver of all good Things, who can dispense them to us in what Manner, and by what Instruments he thinks fit. After the Blessing under the Law, Numb. vi.

24. it is added by God, *I will bless them*—that is, I will confirm and make good this Blessing, delivered by my Servant the Priest, unto all such as shall faithfully and worthily receive it; and there can be no Doubt of God's doing the same to us Christians, when with sincere Faith and humble Gratitude we receive his heavenly Benediction from the Mouth of his Minister under the Gospel. The Blessing now before us contains as it were the Sum and Substance of all our former Petitions—the full Meaning of it I take to be this—" May the Peace of God, or the Sense and Experience of the divine Favour and Goodness (the Comfort whereof surpasses

passes all Understanding and Comprehension) keep your Hearts and Minds stedfast and unmoveable in the true saving Knowledge, and sincere Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord ! and may the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be now, and remain with you, and preserve you, both in Body and Soul, to all Eternity !" And let all the People say Amen !

You will now do well to put up some such short Petition as the following, which may be used at all Times, after the Service of the Church is finished—" May this Blessing remain with me, and with all here present ! and grant, O merciful Lord,

Lord, that what I have faithfully asked according to thy Will, I may effectually obtain, through the Merits of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord !”

The following Prayer, mostly taken from Bishop *Gibson*, is very proper to be used at home, at any Time of the Day that best suits you, after you have communicated.

“ Most gracious and merciful God, who of thy great Goodness hast spared and preserved me to this Day, I give thee humble and hearty Thanks for the Opportunity I have enjoyed of coming to thy holy Table, and receiving the most comfortable Pledges of thy Pardon and Favour. Let not thy Mercy hitherto, in giving

ing me Space for Repentance, encourage me to go on securely in the Neglect of my Duty, but let the Remembrance of thy Goodness, and of the Vows and Resolutions I have made in thy Presence, oblige me perpetually to watch over my Ways, and do that which is well-pleasing in thy Sight. My Heart is corrupt, and deceitful above all Things: sanctify it, I beseech thee, by thy holy Spirit, and establish it for ever in the Paths of Truth and Righteousness. Let not the Cares and Pleasures of this World make me forget the Things of the next; nor do thou ever forsake me in the Hour of Temptation, but be always my Support and Strength in my spiritual Warfare

Warfare against the World, the Flesh,
 and the Devil. Keep me, O Lord,
 from all presumptuous Sins, lest
 they get the Dominion over me;
 and more especially from those which
 do most easily beset me, (here reflect
 on the Sins you are most subject to,
 and beg God's special Grace to guard
 you against them.) These Sins, and
 whatsoever else is contrary to thy
 holy Laws, I will heartily endeavour
 to shun and avoid: And I implore
 the constant Assistance of thy holy
 Spirit, to subdue my Corruptions,
 and restrain all inordinate Desires;
 to make me delight in thy Ways,
 and to fill my Soul with all Christian
 Graces and Virtues; that so striving
 daily against Sin, and growing in
 Grace,

Grace, I may live and die in thy Favour and Obedience, and be at length received into thy eternal and glorious Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of thy Son Jesus Christ, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen."

In some such Devotions as these, and in reading good Books at home, we shall certainly employ our Time very usefully and properly, after having received the holy Sacrament — " But this (to use the Words of the afore-mentioned excellent Prelate) is only *convenient*, not *necessary* ; nor is it required of Persons in any other Degree, than as their Condition in the World, and their Circumstances at that particular Time, will allow—

In

In all such Cases, if Servants and others, who have not the Command of their own Time, cannot employ as much of it in these Exercises, as they wish and desire, they may rest assured, that God approves and accepts their willing Mind, provided they go on in a sincere Resolution to avoid and forsake Sin, and live in the Fear of God, and behave themselves with Conscience and Honesty, in the several Stations, which his Providence has appointed them."

A P P E N D I X I.

*Advice to Parents, and those who have the
Care of the Education of Children.*

THE Education of Children being
an Affair of the utmost Importance, though in general, I fear, greatly misunderstood, or sadly neglected, I shall beg Leave to offer a few short Remarks on that Part of it which relates to their Instruction in religious Matters ; and more particularly (as the Subject I have been upon naturally leads me) to their Attendance on publick Worship.

In

In the first Place, I beg you to observe, that what I advanced in the Fourth Chapter, viz. that “ whoever is fit to pray, or to join in the common Service of the Church, is fit to receive the Sacrament,” relates only to Persons arrived at Years of Discretion. For Children may undoubtedly be fit to pray, and should be taught to do so, both in private and publick, long before they are of Understanding sufficient to attend the Communion, though indeed they are usually taken much too young to Church, and too late to the Sacrament, which is a great and fatal Error, productive of many bad Consequences.

It

It should be the great Care of Parents and others, who are intrusted with their Education, to instil into their tender Minds, as early as possible, a just and awful Sense of God and Religion, and to instruct them in the Nature of Prayer, and their Obligations to perform it. The Lord's Prayer in particular, and other short and easy Forms of Devotion, should be taught and explained to them ; and they should be made frequently to repeat them without Book, slowly and deliberately, so that they may understand, and attend to what they pray for—for which Purpose, two proper Questions should be put to them, as they go on, relative to the Subject of each Petition—

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And

And the same Rule should be strictly observed in regard to their learning the Catechism, which is indeed an excellent Compendium of the Doctrines and Duties of our holy Religion, and therefore very proper for Children to be early instructed in. But I am certain that the common Way of teaching it (if it may be called teaching) can answer no good End or Purpose ; I mean, making them get it by Heart, then letting them repeat it over as fast as they can jabber, without, perhaps, knowing the Meaning of a Word they say. This is treating them more like Parrots, than rational Creatures, and to this shameful Practice much of that gross Ignorance in religious Truths,

so

so observable in Children, and more or less in every Stage of Life, is in a great Measure to be attributed. Ask many grown up Persons (even of tolerable good Understanding in other Matters) the Meaning of some of the plainest Parts of the Catechism, and they will be at a Loss to give you a sensible Answer—How shocking, how inexcusable is this in a Christian Country, and in a Protestant one too, where we have all the Means and Opportunities of Instruction that can be desired, both publick and private! and how apparently is it owing to this Neglect of Education in our younger Years! Many excellent Expositions of the Catechism have been published, and may be had at no great

Expencc : Some of these, therefore, you should procure, in which your Minister, if you consult him, will direct your Choice ; as he will be always ready, I doubt not, to give you and your Children any further Instructions you shall desire. As to the Time proper for first bringing them to Church, no general Rule can be laid down, because their Capacities differ so greatly, and some are so much forwarder than others, but sure I am, they should never be brought thither, till they are fully instructed in the Nature of Prayer and publick Worship, and are capable of joining in it with their Hearts and Understandings, as well as with their Mouths. To take them to
Church,

Church, as you would to any publick Show or Spectacle, merely to gratify their Curiosity, and give them an Hour's Amusement, is worse than foolish, it is really wicked and profane—For what is the Consequence? They not only disturb all that are near them, but they contract an idle Habit of gaping and staring about them, and behaving with great Indecency, which they are apt to retain ever after, even when they are grown up, and should know better. Hence proceeds that scandalous Want of Attention and Devotion, so common in all our Places of religious Worship. To prevent this, you should be very careful to instruct your Children, before you first take them to Church

Church (and often to repeat those Instructions afterwards) in the solemn and important Business they are going about, and to make them duly sensible of the great Honour and Privilege of being admitted into the House of God. You should also keep a watchful Eye over them while they are there, and commend or reprove them after they come home, according as they have deserved. Above all Things you must set them an Example of Piety and Devotion in your own Behaviour at Church, for without that, all your Instructions and Reproofs will signify nothing. When they arrive at Years of Discretion (and this too differs greatly in different Children) and are thoroughly

thoroughly grounded in the Principles of Religion, you should carry them to the Bishop to be confirmed, but not till they have been first well instructed in the Nature of that Rite by the Minister of the Parish. But if no such Opportunity offers, their not having been confirmed should be no Hindrance to their being admitted at a proper Age to the holy Communion; as our Church allows and directs they should be, so soon as they are “confirmed, or are *ready and desirous* to be confirmed”—And then, whenever you have an Opportunity of a Confirmation, you will be sure to make Use of it.

In regard to their Preparation for the Sacrament, I have given my Sentiments

timents on that Head so fully already,
 that I need not here repeat them.
 I would only observe further, that
 a very particular Care should be tak-
 en to inform them as fully and clear-
 ly as possible in the Nature and Im-
 portance of that sacred Ordinance,
 before their first Communion; and
 to see that their Behaviour at it be
 devout and proper. Shew them,
 from Scripture and Reason, the Obli-
 gations they all lie under to an early
 and frequent Performance of this
 Duty, and convince them of the many
 great Blessings and Benefits attend-
 ing it—Make it, if possible, to be
 their Delight and Happiness, as it
 is their Interest to join in it; and
 never suffer them to harbour any
 foolish

foolish Fears or Scruples concerning it.

In a Word, endeavour as much as you can to keep up in their Minds a constant and lively Sense of their Duty in general ; and to see that their Behaviour be conformable thereto—And for your Encouragement herein, remember the Words of Solomon, that if you thus *train up a Child in the Way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.*

APPENDIX II.

A friendly Admonition to the Methodists.

DON'T be offended at my addressing you under the Title of Methodists, which I assure you, I do not mean as a Term of Reproach, but use it merely for Distinction's Sake, to point out the Persons to whom I write, and who are commonly (though perhaps improperly) called by that Name.—As many of you have been famous for your constant Attendance on the holy Sacrament, I hope it may not be thought improper,

improper, at the Conclusion of a Treatise on that Subject, to praise and applaud you for the good Example you have set us in this Particular. Your Zeal too for the Doctrines of our holy Religion, and your Practice of many of its Precepts, particularly the general Sobriety and Regularity of your Lives, are deserving of much Commendation.

Yet, give me leave to ask you, or rather let me intreat you seriously to ask your own Consciences, if there is not one very material and essential Duty, in which you are greatly wanting? I mean, to use the Words of St. Paul, that of *endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. To which Purpose, you
well

well know, there are many other plain and positive Injunctions in holy Writ—Or, in other Words, are not you guilty to a very high Degree, of the Sin of Schism, or of causing Divisions in the Church of Christ? Such of you, more especially, as have of late forsaken our publick Worship, and gone over to that of the Dissenters?—I would ask too, whether the setting up a Tabernacle, or whatever you please to call it (for that is disputing about Words) has not a very pernicious Tendency, in alienating the Minds of the People from the established Worship and Ministry, which the Preachers there do not scruple to depreciate and asperse?—Surely you, of all People, should

should not desert that Church, whose
 Doctrines you must allow to be per-
 fectly agreeable to the Sacred Scrip-
 tures, for which you profess the
 highest Veneration—I speak not of
 the Points in Debate between us and
 the Dissenters, which are very trifling
 and immaterial, in comparison of
 those *weightier* Matters of Faith,
 wherein, I trust, we all agree. If
 our Sermons don't please you (for
 that, I know, is made one Pretence
 for leaving us) will that justify your
 Separation from the more material
 Part of our Service, which is always
 the same, and to which, I am per-
 suaded, you can have no Objection?
 Our excellent Liturgy, you will not
 deny, to be a most complete Model
 of

of true Piety and Devotion. We may most eminently be said to “read our Duty in our Prayers”—And what if every Sermon, or every Expression in a Sermon, don’t exactly hit your Fancy? Or rather, who made you Criticks and Judges of the Ministers of God’s Word? I am certain, that the worthy Man who has for so many Years had the Care of this Parish, can give you no just Cause of Offence; He preaches true Christianity—sound orthodox Doctrine, and what is no less necessary, sound Morality. I wish your Preachers would do the same, instead of always dwelling upon Points of Faith and Speculation, without taking any Pains to explain and enforce those

those of Practice. How different in this Respect from our great Master, and his Apostles ! Read their Discourses and Epistles, and see how they constantly labour to inculcate every Precept of Morality, as well as to explain Matters of Faith. And as to Exhortations to Love, and Unity, and Concord among Christians, the New Testament, you know, is full of them. May God give us all Grace seriously to attend to them, and in every Thing to regulate our Conduct thereby ! And may we all join heartily and sincerely in the following admirable Prayer of our Church !

A PRAYER for UNITY.

O God ! the Father of our Lord
 Jesus Christ, our only Saviour,
 the

the Prince of Peace, give us Grace seriously to lay to Heart the great Dangers we are in by our unhappy Divisions. Take away all Hatred and Prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly Union and Concord. That as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all ; so we may henceforth be all of one Heart, and of one Soul, united in one holy Bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, and may we with one Mind and one Mouth, glorify thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen !



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